

September 27, 2013

To: Executive Board

Subject: **25th Anniversary**

Recommendation

Provide direction on 25th Anniversary celebration preferences.

Analysis

For the past 25 years, Foothill Transit has marked the passing of milestone anniversaries – 10th, 15th, and 20th – in various ways. In general, the anniversaries were commemorated with lapel pins, posters, shirts and in some cases, advertising campaigns. Foothill Transit's silver anniversary, or 25th year, was originally conceived as a customer-oriented campaign with extensive outreach capped by a large celebratory event. In the wake of regional financial distress and local service challenges, this kind of high visibility campaign and expenditure might be out of sync with Foothill Transit's sensitive attention towards community stewardship. An additional exploration of options to mark the 25th anniversaries was executed.

Background

The 10th anniversary, being the first major milestone of the agency, was celebrated extensively at Foothill Transit. A specially crafted commemorative logo was applied to lapel pins, posters, keychains and a special partial bus wrap decal was applied to the rear of our coaches. Small toy "beanie buses" were also created, along with a special commemorative 10th anniversary bus pass. An extensive advertising campaign culminated in a large celebratory stakeholder dinner attended by local elected officials, city staff and community partners. The evening recognized individuals who were instrumental to the establishment and success of Foothill Transit.

In contrast, the 15th and 20th anniversaries were much more subdued as each coincided with the recessions of 2003 and 2008 respectively and were chronologically adjacent to budget constraints that led to fare increases and service realignments. Each anniversary was marked with the creation of a special commemorative logo that was applied to mugs, lapel pins, and shirts and was utilized in agency advertising through that year to brand it as an anniversary year for the agency. No commemorative events were executed and promotions were respectfully restrained.

25th Anniversary Proposal

In 2013, Foothill Transit finds itself on stable financial ground due in large part to selective conservative budget planning and service realignment due to the extended effects of what is now being called The Great Recession. While the agency currently

has the fiscal stability to execute a large celebratory anniversary event, doing so in the face of regional financial difficulties may be interpreted as imprudent. A menu of alternative anniversary plans was developed with this in mind.

Option 1

Option 1 follows the 10th anniversary paradigm, executing an extensive promotional campaign in advertising in print and digital media, on foothilltransit.org and social media, and on board the buses. In addition to logo and branding development, a large stakeholder celebratory event would be held at a local venue centralized to the service area to recognize the agency's 25 years of achievements and service and would include food, the distribution of various anniversary branded promotional items including a mug, pin, shirts, Foothill Transit toy bus with the new livery and a special 25th anniversary sticker and other marketing items.

Option 2

Option 2 forgoes a celebratory event and focuses on a customer-centric approach to promotion. Marketing items such as a mug, pin, shirts and decals would be created along with on-board and online messaging that focuses on Foothill Transit's appreciation of customers. Small "street team" events at large transfer points in Foothill Transit's service area could also hand out appreciation gifts to customers thanking them for riding Foothill Transit. Local advertising efforts would also focus on customer appreciation.

Option 3

Option 3 follows the more low-key 15th and 20th anniversary models – creation of anniversary branded items limited to a mug, pin and shirt and the use of 25th anniversary logo in on board communication that focuses on customer appreciation. A limited local ad campaign could also be employed.

Fiscal Impact

Option 1 includes several cost components including advertising, printed collateral, the creation of marketing items, and a large celebratory event. Total costs for Option 1 come to approximately \$185,000.

Option 2 includes local advertising, interior bus cards, marketing items and the use of "street team" ambassadors to greet and thank customers at specific high traffic transfer points in the service area. Total costs for Option 2 come to approximately \$90,500.

Option 3 includes the creation of marketing items, interior bus cards, and a limited local advertising campaign. Total estimated costs of Option 3 come to approximately \$54,500.



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Each option is scalable based on the Board's direction and could be altered to reflect a more prudent or a more robust marketing plan.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Felicia Friesema, consisting of a large, stylized 'F' followed by a horizontal line and a small circle at the end.

Felicia Friesema
Director of Marketing and Communications

A blue ink signature of Doran J. Barnes, featuring a stylized 'D' and 'B'.

Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director